/74 cont./

692 693 [641] An essential principle of the social life of the Refugee Blacks is that every citizen carries the law within himself. If several men are requested to arbitrate a private quarrel, it is said that they form a lãnti kuutu. But they can hand down only a sentence of conciliation. Only the general assembly convoked by the grand man has the power to impose its decision.

692 775 The ordinary role of the lãnti kuutu is to judge the dead, to make sure that they were not wisimã (sorcerers), to proceed to their interrogation in order to give the force of law to the answers, especially in what concerns inheritance.

692 693 775 The lãnti kuutu meets when a death is announced; the first to arrive go to the grand man who designates two of the captains to preside over the council this time (for all the members are equal). In fact, rare are the councils attended by all the men present in the villages. Most of the time the lãnti kuutu groups only about 30 men, mostly old men.

692 The lãnti kuutu meets very rarely to judge a living man. That has happened only three times between 1948 and 1957.

692 687 In 1948 the grand man convoked the lãnti kuutu to judge a man who, duly called as boatman to take him to Saint-Laurent, had not come. He was sentenced to make a pallisade around the grand man's habitation, which took more than a month of work. /75/

692 685 In 1953 the council met to judge Loko (Dju), who had made himself guilty of aggravated theft (simulated shipwreck to the detriment of a Benzdorp trader and resale of the merchandise), for which he had been condemned by French justice to several months in prison. Loko had to make honorable amends in the presence of the assembled members of his lineage, then he was sentenced to make 50 planks for the benefit of the grand man.

[224] [643] In August, 1957, the council met to judge Pototo (Asisi-Dju), 23 years old, and Amusupé (Asisi-Aw.B.), 70 years old, who were guilty of a grave offense: misappropriation of a tapir (malpouri) killed by a Djuka who, feeling gratitude toward the grand man, had made known his intention to offer him part of the meat.

/75 cont./

692 685 [224] The Djuka had killed the tapir which had sunk. Pressed for time, he had had to leave, requesting the Asisi people to look for it.

[251] [262] The next day Pototo and Amusupé found the animal floating between two waters. They hid it in the bush and had it smoke-dried on their own behalf. They ate it with their wives (about 100 kilos of meat).

That ended up by becoming known, and a jealous man denounced them to the grand man.

Called before the lãnti kuutu, they had to apologize and were each sentenced to pay as a fine to the grand man a demijohn of 15 liters of tafia (worth about 6,000 francs) within four months.

[735] Both of them were at a loss to pay this fine, belonging to the category of ne'er-do-wells who have no regular activity and live from day to day, selling some fish or game from time to time.

[613] Amusupé appealed to Captain Konduku, head of his lineage, who agreed to pay for the tafia for him, Amusupé reimbursing him little by little.

[613] [689] As for Pototo, the head of his lineage refused categorically to help him because he had eaten the maïpouri alone without allowing his family to share it (the village people would have found it normal to profit by the crime, but they deemed it immoral that one of their relatives had deprived them of meat). After three and a half months, Pototo began to occupy himself seriously at a paid job which he had the luck to find because we needed a bossman for two weeks.

[123]

577 626 [522] The Boni did nothing but laugh while telling us this story. Affairs of this kind, which do not involve any suprahuman intervention, escape in large measure their social morality; they have a certain feeling for what should be done, but submit to it only in proportion as they fear a material and immediate sanction.

/81 cont./

423 The right to fish in certain rivers is held by lineages; other
222 rivers are regarded as property common to the inhabitants of a
613 village, whatever their kinship may be.
621 For example, the right to fish in Kumata Kiiki, a small
[425] creek of the Surinam bank, near the village of Kotika, is reserved for members of the Lapé lineage (the members of this lineage farmed there formerly, but they abandoned these lands, currently farmed by the Kotika people).

Maripa and Likanaon creeks, downstream from Boniville, are reserved for the inhabitants of Boniville.

Asisi Creek is reserved for the inhabitants of Asisi (Dju, Awara Bakka, and Dipélu II lineages).

423 The right to hunt cannot be reserved; everyone has the right
[224] to hunt anywhere.

[222] The right to gather and the right to cut trees for making
[313] planks or boats is generally bound up with the right to farm.

423 The right to collect underground products is completely
316 independent of the right to farm. For example, if someone finds
317 a seam of kaolin (pemba) on the lands of another lineage, he exploits it freely. This aspect of the legal conceptions of the Refugee Blacks is very interesting, for it shows that even from the
423 point of view of customary law, the grand man is not entitled to
316 exercise any rights over the production of the Creole gold miners.
648 He could demand indemnities only insofar as these gold miners farm lands over which the Boni exercise customary rights. The interminable discussions which the claims of Grand Man Anato brought on at the time of the Lawa gold rush at the end of the past century would have been avoided by a better knowledge of the customary law.

/254 cont./

784 756 751 If someone realizes that he has broken his kina, he goes to see, not an ɔbiaman, but the specialist-healer of leprosy and asks him to treat him by way of prevention.

411 832 [177] [558] Beliefs about guns and hunting. The gun, which entered the everyday life of the Refugee Blacks two centuries ago, has taken an important place in their magic. It is the symbol of virility. A Refugee Black who no longer has a gun is a man humiliated and almost dishonored. As one of them explained to us in begging us to help him replace his old gun eaten by rust: "If you cannot present yourself before the women with a machete, hunting bag on your shoulder, and gun in your hand, you are not a man."

411 754 This idea has been transposed onto the plane of magic and they take for granted that the wisimã can, by putting evil spells on a gun, attack the owner of the weapon in his virility. It is supposed to be enough for someone to put his finger into the barrel of the gun while uttering a formula of vengeance, or even being moved by hate for the owner of the weapon, for this gun to be no longer capable of hitting the mark. So, to avoid these misfortunes, the Boni never part with their guns and never lend them to anyone. If, in spite of these precautions, they have the impression that a gun no longer fires so well, they will go to an ɔbiaman to have it washed of maleficent influence. There exist for that purpose several remedies all of which consist of soaking the gun for one to three days in infusions of leaves, which has the unfailing result of making it rust. We have seen a hammerless, latest model gun spoiled thus by an intelligent Boni head boatman, a clever mechanic and usually full of good sense.

411 789

224 We have never witnessed among the Boni any individual or collective hunting rites claiming to attract game or to promote meeting it (when, on the contrary, hunting playes are extremely widespread among the Creoles).